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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2018

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SUBJECT: IRELAND FIRMLY COMMITTED TO OSLO PROCESS BAN ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

REF: STATE 167308

Classified By: Political/Economic Section Chief Theodore S. Pierce for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Ireland, one of the founding members of the Oslo Process, stands firm on its support for the Oslo Process ban on cluster munitions despite potential interoperability difficulties. Ireland sees the Oslo Process as consistent with its strong humanitarian record and it is unlikely to budge from its position. End summary.

¶2. (C) Ireland fully supports the proposed text of the Oslo Process and is willing to accept any potential interoperability difficulties that may result, according to Nicholas Twist, Department of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, to whom POLOFF delivered reftel demarche and non-papers on January 3. Ireland anticipates that the interoperability problems will become less of an issue as more and more countries sign on to the Oslo Process, Twist said, using the Ottawa Convention on land mines as an example of how countries slowly adopted an agreement and banned land mines "when they were ready." Twist said that Ireland expects the ban on cluster munitions to progress in the same fashion and that, eventually, most countries will sign on to the Oslo Process.

¶3. (C) POLOFF emphasized the USG's shared humanitarian concerns and support for negotiations on cluster munitions within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) framework. Twist acknowledged the U.S. position and mentioned that the Russian political attache had also met recently with Twist's office to discuss the same issue. While the CCW has its uses, Twist agreed, the CCW framework was not conducive to creating a ban on cluster munitions, which was the same information he gave the Russians, he added.

¶4. (C) Twist highlighted the growing support for the Oslo Process and said he expected that the final wording of the text would be agreed upon during the two-week conference that Ireland will host in Dublin in May 2008. He anticipated that the final text would be ready for the scheduled Oslo Process signing ceremony in Oslo in the Fall.

¶5. (C) Comment: Given Ireland's leading roll as one of the

founding members of the Oslo Process, Twist's response to the demarche was unsurprising. Ireland is not a member of NATO, although it is a participant in the Partnership for Peace program. Its small roll in overseas military operations, limited to UN humanitarian efforts, make it likely that potential interoperability problems will not affect it directly. Ireland sees the Oslo Process as consistent with its strong humanitarian record and it is unlikely to budge from its position. End comment.

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